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ABSTRACT

The paper reviews scope, objectives, and the publication record of the "Journal of Geography in Higher Education" (JGHE) from its beginning in 1977 to 1981. The purpose of the paper was to share concerns of the journals' founders and editors with an audience of American geographers regarding a variety of journal-related matters, including a detailed description of what the journal is and does, the journal's potential significance to American geographers, background of the editorial staff, budgetary limitations, advertising schemes in various parts of the world, future publication prospects, the need for articles with a more practical focus, and the need for more feedback from professional geographers. Information presented about the JGHE characterizes it as being a journal which (1) is the only international journal specifically concerned with the teaching of geography in higher education, (2) was developed largely by staff from Polytechnic Institutes (rather than universities) in the United Kingdom, (3) has so far succeeded in being a reasonably low-cost but high-quality journal, (4) needs authors who are more aware of geographically-related educational literature, and (5) would be very interested in redressing its current bias toward human geography with more articles on physical geography. The document concludes with copies of the contents pages of two recent issues of the JGHE. (DB)

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THE JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY IN HIGHER EDUCATION (JGHE): AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION IN GEOGRAPHICAL HIGHER EDUCATION

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WHAT IS THE JGHE?

- The only international journal specifically concerned with the teaching of geography in higher education.

- Published twice a year since Spring, 1977.

- A forum in which geography teachers of diverse specialisms can 'meet' to discuss their common teaching interests.

- It grew out of a concern that the importance of teaching had been undervalued in geographical higher education.

> "... The limited attention given... to what we teach (let alone how we teach it) would suggest that we do not believe that this matter is particularly important. Yet it is this very teaching at both undergraduate and graduate levels, that conditions the present health of our subject and its future growth."
>
> From Professor S. Gregory's Presidential Address to the Institute of British Geographers, Coventry, January, 1976.

> "(British) higher education is a field of local initiatives... The flow of information about teaching is as rudimentary as that of research is highly developed-and the difference between the two is an indication of priorities."
>
> From "Making the Best of It: Reconciling Ends, Means and Resources in Higher Education" a report to the Nuffield Foundation in The Times Higher Education Supplement. 3 December, 1976.

ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO YOU.

- We would hope/expect members of AAG specialty group in geographic education to write for the JGHE/to buy it/to ensure their department does/(end of advertising!).

- More critically our feeling is that many of the problems the Editorial Board of JGHE has had to try to solve are similar to the problems this specialty group will encounter.

- The 'success' of the JGHE and of this specialty group are interlinked. They both have to demonstrate (to a partially skeptical community) the value of geographic education.

THE SPIRO AGNEW OF GEOGRAPHY?

- Developed out of an insecure institutional base: people starting it largely drawn from Polytechnics in United Kingdom which are subordinate in academic hierarchy to universities.

- Editorial Board not 'household words' in academic geography: note William Pattison's queery whether Teaching and Learning In Graduate Geography Project (TLGG) should have been organized around "A faculty member of considerable seniority, well established as scholar or scientist, who is recognized for his teaching excellence.... The fact is that the TLGG was not organized around this sort of individual." More on Preparing Others to Profess. Volume 1, 46.

- Somewhat similar to the local directors of the TLGG Projects, the Editorial Board of JGHE were mainly younger faculty members.

- The Editorial Board were mainly geography teachers/ researchers-they had little or no formal training in education (the exception to this was a specialist in the teaching of geography at secondary level).

- We also faced the problem of the attitudes of the geographical profession to any formal discussion of education/ teaching.

- These attitudes are so pervasive that they need little clarification here, but it is worth emphasising that TLGG faced the same problem of what Pattison calls the 'University' idea of the primacy of the research model.

> "An extraordinary culture develops in which powerful models - professors who are 'makers and shapers' of subject matter are dominant figures... within this culture any special program of teaching preparation tends to seem diversionary...."
>
> Pattison, Op Cit, 34.

- Certainly when we started, the general feeling amongst academic geographers in the U.K. was that our main readership would be lecturers in education faculties and colleges of education (colleges whose central focus is the training of elementary and secondary school teachers.)

- The Editorial Board wished to appeal to all geographers in higher education but whether we could produce such a journal was doubtful.

- In addition we were essentially a home produced journal: with all stages of production, except printing, done at Oxford Polytechnic....

- Preliminary discussion with publishers told us that our idea of a journal specifically devoted to the teaching of geography in higher education was not a commercial certainty and that we would have to produce 'healthy' sales before they would be interested in publishing such a journal....

ARE WE THE CINDERELLA OF GEOGRAPHY?

- We have produced a reasonably high quality, but low cost journal which has had some 'success'.

- Despite having a very small advertising budget the growth of sales has been satisfactory.

- As of June, 1980, the figures were:

United Kingdom	180
United States	75
Canada	40
Australia	25
Rest of World	60
	380

- The above is a reasonable figure/indicates a certain success in producing an 'international' journal: it also indicates only partial success in being recognised in the U.S.A.

- It also enabled us to obtain a good arrangement with a commercial publisher.

- As of April, 1981 the JGHE will be published by Carfax Publishing Co., Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxford, England.

- We thus have obtained some permanency.

- Increased recognition from the geographic community has occured, to cite two examples:

- In his review of recent developments in human geography Peter Gould stated that "most of the demanding and worthwhile geographical writing appears in the newer geographical journals" and especially mentioned JGHE as one of these journals. Gould, Peter (1979) "Geography" 1957-1977, the Augean Period; Annals of the Association of American Geographers. 69 (1) 1939-150.

- In their review of recent developments in British geography, Doornkamp and Warren stated "There has been some appreciation, over the past four years, of the need for geographers to become better acquainted with the skills of teaching above all the ability to think as opposed merely to learn. This concern has led to the establishment of The Journal of Geography in Higher Education." Doornkamp, J. C. and Warren, K. (1980)"Geography in the United Kingdom 1976-1980." Geographical Journal, March, 94-108.

- A recognizable identity: we sense that the journal has a clear identity: certainly the Editorial Board has now a clearer sense of the type of articles we want... When we started we had certain ideas but editorial policy has really only emerged out of the practice of dealing with submitted articles.

- In our opinion a broad range of useful articles have been published - see Appendix A as an example of the titles of published articles.

HOWEVER, THERE ARE STILL PROBLEMS TO BE OVERCOME.

(A) AN EDUCATIONAL GHETTO

- Evidently we wish to have a special appeal to those geographers with a particular interest in geographic education.

- Yet if our appeal ends/or even centres there then we have failed to have any general impact: from the outset we have tried to appeal to all geography teachers in higher education.

- Thus the praise of Professor Mead in his review of geography journals is double-edged:

> "And the educationalists have the Journal of Geography in Higher Education."
>
> The Times Higher Education Supplement, c. May,1980.

- That we were one of the journals mentioned out of the total range of geography journals indicates our 'success': that we are seemingly just for the educationalists indicates our 'failure.'

- Our 'response' to this problem has been to try and ensure that we involve a wide range/number of geographers in the journal: the Board has tried to reach out and give people the chance to shape editorial policy.

- We have also tried to ensure that we carry articles by people known for their geographic research discussing their teaching.

- We are particularly indebted to Peter Gould for his contributions/support... Likewise others have given significant support.

(B) A FAILURE TO BE "EDUCATIONAL"

- Many of the submitted articles (and some of the published ones) revealed little awareness of the educational literature.

- We wish to connect geographers into the body of knowledge developed by those 'researching' in higher education.

- Our contention is that the JGHE would be more 'effective' if the published articles drew more fully on educational theory.

- Our responses to this problem have been:

B_1) As numbers of submitted articles increase we can more carefully select on this basis. Geography authors are now increasingly asked to resubmit after they have further consulted (and used) the educational literature. (David Hill's and Nicholas Helburn's article in the ~~Spring~~ Fall 1981 issue is a model of one type of article we want: based on their own practice as teachers its arguments are carefully grounded in the educational literature. This article did not require resubmitting!

B_2) Appoint to the Board specialists in higher education (if possible with a geography background though this is not essential.) Such Board members have to accept that our readership/contributors will be mainly attuned to geography as a discipline. The 'educationist' board members job is to help the author make his/her article more clearly grounded in education.

- This policy somewhat parallels the contribution that expert educational advisers played in the TLGG Project (Pattison, Op Cit., 21-2). The policy carries with it the danger of driving away those who see themselves as geographers and consigning the JGHE and its readers to a educational ghetto (and presumably commercial failure).

(C) LACK OF PRACTICAL ARTICLES.

- Far too many of earlier submitted articles were exhortatory. They pointed out the collective error of our ways and urged us onwards to a vague promised land.

- Very few articles were explanatory, giving us practical advice on how to teach: We had hoped for articles that described (and evaluated) a teaching approach: Very few such articles were submitted: While evaluation tended to be anecdoctal: Evaluation perfunctory as it was, generally gushing - very very few authors frankly pointed out the problems they had encountered and failed to overcome.

- The only long term answer to this policy has been to prod people to write such articles/to ask authors to re-submit (and re-submit...).

- Thus as submitted articles increase we are in a position to print articles that are of obvious practical value to the geography teacher.

- These may be lengthy detailed instructional articles, e.g., Finlayson, Brian (1979) Electrical Conductivity: "A Useful Technique in Teaching Geomorphology," JGHE, 3 (2) 68-87.

- They may also be short descriptive accounts: Such that the practising teacher can go and try the approach: Morrill, Robert W. (1980) "Political Geography, Sketch Maps and Introductions in Dyads," JGHE, 4(2) 27-29.

We now also expect to carry more articles when geography teachers have experimented with alternative teaching strategies and done a thorough 'scientific' evaluation of their effectiveness.

(D) A BIAS TOWARDS HUMAN GEOGRAPHY.

- Very few of submitted articles have been on Physical Geography.

- This is perhaps because there are other outlets: We have not signaled our interest in harder, more practical, scientific... articles (but then we haven't received them)...

- If this trend continues it does indicate a serious failure to appeal to the whole spectrum of geographers.

(E) ITS PART OF A WIDER PROBLEM.

One (unnamed!) JGHE Board member sees the problem as "We still have a long way to go, and the reason why in my opinion lies in exactly the sort of prejudice against education that I once would have shared, for me the development of the JGHE has been an important learning process: One that has touched my own development and outlook in an indelible way. I know that other members of the Board share at least some of that feeling."

A PLEA AND A CHALLENGE

- Support the JGHE as subscribers, readers, writers and prosleytisers....

- Give us your opinions on the sort of articles we are carrying/or not carrying! An editorial board tries to involve people... But you can also reach out to us: How do you think we can solve the problems listed above?

- The JGHE can help this interest group to prosper: Hopefully we can help raise the status of both educational research and the act of teaching so that they come to count for something (perhaps even in career terms).

- The challenge to you is that we depend on you not only for articles... But also if you are seen by members of the AAG as 'producing' something of interest/value to them so you will help to raise the status... of geographical education.

- The JGHE and this interest group can both spend what is probably fruitless time in moral exhortation.

- But our best efforts will be directed at demonstrating to the wider geographic community that ~~JGHE~~ has something of practical value/interest... to them.

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